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1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 02-22-2007	2. REPORT TYPE Book review	3. Dates Covered 2006

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Book review of Mastering Virtual Teams (Duarte and Synder, 2006)

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
N/A

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)
Harville, Donald, L DR02, AFRL/HEPF

5d. PROJECT NUMBER
7757

5e. TASK NUMBER
P9

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
07

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Air Force Material Command   Brooks City-Base, TX 78235
Air Force Research Laboratory
Human Effectiveness Directorate
Biosciences and Protection Division
Biobehavioral Performance Branch
2485 Gillingham Drive

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
AFRL-HE-BR-JA-2007-0004

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited PA Approval # 07-113

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
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14. ABSTRACT
The book is reviewed in terms of its intended audience, strengths, and weaknesses. It has very useful discussions of technological, cultural, and personality aspects of team success. The book is recommended for managers and for team members who currently use or plan to use virtual teams.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Virtual Teams, Team Performance

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Donald L. Harville
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass	Unclass	4	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(include area code)*

I really have no criticisms of this book, which is rare for me. I learned more about a part of our economy I knew little about before, and the book is easy reading despite all of its details. But would I recommend it to I-O psychologists? Yes. Although I have no idea whether any I-O's are doing any teaching about, any research on, or any working with businesses in the fringe economy, I nevertheless think the subject is relevant for both the I side and the O side of our field. If I tried for a few hours I think I could, for example, come up with a long list of research questions. Admittedly, answering them might be daunting, as Karger discovered when he sought out primary sources, so I leave the opportunity of raising and answering the questions with you rather than take it upon myself (give me a break, I'm retired).

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Deborah L. Duarte and Nancy Tennant Snyder. **Mastering Virtual Teams** (3rd edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006, 247 pages, $49.00 hardcover.

Reviewed by *Donald L. Harville*, Research Psychologist, Air Force Research Laboratory, Brooks City-Base, TX.[2]

This book is oriented toward managers and team members, not toward researchers. However, the Notes and Further Readings sections can be used to locate relevant research articles. Both authors have impressive experience and training relevant to virtual teams. The book follows a logical progression from understanding virtual teams, to creating them, and finally to mastering them. A useful strategy for reading this book cover to cover would be to read the Near Virtual Disaster example at the end of most chapters prior to reading the chapter. If you already have a virtual team established, another strategy would be to read all the disaster examples then immediately read the chapters potentially relevant to your team. Unfortunately, the book is not always user friendly for someone unfamiliar with all of the technologies mentioned. It would slightly increase production costs, but photos, or even schematic figures of the lesser well-known technologies (e.g., electronic meeting systems), would be very useful.

I strongly recommend that everyone new to virtual teams read the virtual team myths discussed in Chapter 4. Even if you do not hold any of these myths yourself, someone else on your team probably holds one

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[2] Views expressed are the reviewer's and not necessarily those of the U.S. Air Force or the Department of Defense.

or more of them. In my opinion, the more common myths include team members not needing attention; the added complexity of using technology is greatly exaggerated; the leader needs to be multilingual, have lived in other countries, or have worked in different functions; and building and maintaining trust is unimportant. Less common myths are that when you do not regularly see team members, it is difficult to help them with their assignments and career progression; networking matters less in virtual environments, it is only about results; and every aspect of virtual teams should be planned, organized, and controlled so that there are no surprises. Each myth is fortunately broken down into a relevant competence, as well as developmental activities for developing the competence. One developmental activity for the myth involving planning every aspect is to speak with other virtual team leaders to discover any common processes relevant to all teams.

There are numerous checklists and tables both in the book and on the CD that comes with it. Multiple tables with strengths and weaknesses of the various technologies will help generate high-quality questions on which technology to see, use, try, or buy. However, the authors have so much experience with virtual teams that sometimes the text seems to make virtual teams more complex than they usually are. In other words, at times the reviewer thought, "Why not skip the headaches, and not do it at all or just hire consultants with experience with virtual teams?" In fairness to the authors, the reviewer's opinion is that many professionals make their professions sound more complex than they are in reality.

Useful examples in addition to the Virtual Disaster ones keep the reader's interest. One was a prison parole example. For two out of four prisoners, face-to-face prison parole board members recommended against parole, but closed-circuit television parole board members recommended parole. This difference was explained by noting that in interviews the face-to-face board members mentioned body language and facial expression cues not available to the closed-circuit television board members. As a hardcore fan of time management, I really appreciated the examples of using keywords in the subject lines of e-mails to help the recipient prioritize them. Using "FYI" only in the subject line means that it is not urgent but contains something of interest. Seeing "ACTION BY (DATE): (SUBJECT)" means that a response or action is needed by the given date and to notify the sender immediately if you cannot make the deadline. An "URGENT FYI" means that the information must be read immediately, and "URGENT ACTION: (SUBJECT)" means the recipient must read and take action on the noted subject immediately.

In a vein similar to time management, one of the near virtual disasters ends with a lessons-learned checklist of activities that will help prevent disasters. These include having a dry run, checking on the meeting room

and the technology the day before, personally learning how to work the technology in the room, having a technology backup, ensuring that each location has an alternative technology that can be used without disrupting the meeting (e.g., instant messaging), and scheduling a technology professional and assistant to help in the event that problems should arise. Although not mentioned, the assistant could be responsible for completing part or even most of the checklist.

Because virtual teams often involve personnel from different cultures/countries, the section on the national category of culture was useful. Most of this text used the work of Hofstede (1967), who looked at employees of IBM Corporation. One dimension of national culture is power distance. This dimension refers to how much inequity among people the population expects and accepts. For example, China, Mexico, France, and Arab countries are high-power countries, with great respect for one's superiors. Lower-power countries include the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. Uncertainty avoidance, the extent to which members of a culture are comfortable with uncertainty, is another dimension of culture. Japan, France, and Italy are countries high on uncertainty avoidance. Individuals from these cultures seek details about plans, desire closure, and prefer predictability. In contrast, individuals from low-uncertainty countries, such as Singapore, India, Canada, and the United States, have less of a need for defined rules, procedure, and processes.

There is also a functional category of culture, and a useful table compares behaviors in engineering, software development, research and development (R&D), accounting and finance, sales and marketing, and production and manufacturing cultures. For example the authors claim that personnel in R&D prefer structure and detail within scientific context. The table helps to understand how differences in functional backgrounds can cause conflicts regarding resource allocation and how to best proceed at different stages of the team's duties. These differences are also important for the areas of competence that virtual team members need to exhibit. The technologies used, combined with the amount of geographic dispersal, affect the competencies of project management, networking, and self-management, spanning boundaries of cultures and functions, and interpersonal awareness. These competencies can be maximized by using special efforts to keep those in remote areas or in partner organizations aware of what is happening. This is especially important when communicating a balanced presentation of controversial information. A near virtual disaster provides an example of not exhibiting these competencies. It involves a videoconference where one person makes negative comments about someone else, without knowing that the other person is in attendance at the conference, but outside of the view of the camera.

In summary, I strongly recommend this book both for managers and for team members who currently use or plan to use virtual teams. It has very useful discussions of technological, cultural, and personality aspects of team success. Investing some time in reading and applying it can easily save significant amounts of time, reduce or even eliminate headaches, and improve the products/services produced by teams.

REFERENCE

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Leonard D. Goodstein and Eric P. Prien. **Using Individual Assessments in the Workplace: A Practical Guide for HR Professionals, Trainers, and Managers.** San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2006, 213 pages, $45.00 hardcover. Reviewed by *Lee J. Konczak,* Director, Executive Development & Selection Systems, Anheuser-Busch Companies, St. Louis, MO.

Evidence suggests that HR professionals spend a considerable amount of their time devoted to individual assessment of applicants and employees (Jeanneret & Silzer, 1998). And, with the advent of Internet testing, testing and assessment tools are even more accessible than in the past (Tippins et al., 2006). Given these trends, a nontechnical, practical book geared toward a practitioner audience that outlines the key issues to consider in using assessments appropriately to enhance business results would be a welcome resource. Goodstein and Prien wrote this book to increase understanding of how tests and assessments can be used effectively for employment-related purposes. The book is intended for four target audiences, including (a) managers who use assessments for decision making, (b) HR professionals who conduct such assessments but may lack a good understanding of the inherent issues involved in assessment work, (c) trainers who may use tests and assessments in their training and development efforts, and (d) others who are interested in how individual assessments should be conducted. Although professional psychologists are not included as members of the intended audience, the authors suggest that they too may find this book useful.

In general, I found the book to be clearly written and well organized. By design, the book is intentionally prescriptive throughout and is composed of six chapters and nine appendices that include a listing of tests commonly used in business settings, a description of how to conduct a job analysis study, sample job descriptions, sample competency models, and sample assessment reports.

In terms of content, the first chapter provides an overview of the book's organization, a definition of individual assessment that focuses on the data